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SUBJECT: MFA DG TALKS TAIWAN, NEAPSM, DALAI LAMA WITH EAP
DAS CHRISTENSEN

REF: BEIJING 1799

Classified By: Deputy Political Section Chief Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

11. (C) In a wide-ranging discussion with visiting EAP DAS Thomas Christensen May 10, MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Director General Zheng Zeguang emphasized the importance President Hu places on his relationship with President Bush and China's willingness to work cooperatively with the United States on international and regional issues. He specifically praised President's Bush's statement that the Olympic Games should not be politicized. He noted that the dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives would continue at an uncertain future date, but disagreed with the suggestion that the Dalai Lama has met the preconditions for direct dialogue (opposing Tibetan independence, renouncing violence, and supporting a successful Olympics). He asserted that the "entire Chinese nation" is united on the issue of Tibet. Zheng requested that the United States give the Mainland and Taiwan time and space to work out their differences and not to disrupt the positive environment by announcing new arms sales. Zheng pledged that China would be helpful on the Six Party process and was supportive of discussions on the Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism. Zheng's discussion with DAS Christensen on Burma is reported reftel. End Summary

High Level Contacts

12. (C) Over a working lunch with East Asia and Pacific Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Thomas Christensen on May 10, MFA North American and Oceanian Affairs Director General Zheng Zeguang commented that President Hu very much values his ties to President Bush. Although he was not able to take the President's phone call during his state visit to Japan, he immediately ordered Foreign Minister Yang to get on the phone with Secretary Rice. After President Hu returns to Beijing May 11, the two sides can arrange for a call. Zheng said he will accompany Vice Premier Wang Qishan on his visit to the United States in June for the Strategic Economic Dialogue with Treasury Secretary Paulson. He noted that Wang and Paulson should get along very well and that they had previously met when Wang was serving as the Executive Vice Governor of Guangdong Province. In that position, Wang had presided over China's first bankruptcy proceeding for a state-owned enterprise. Zheng said he had also accompanied current vice president Xi Jinping to the United States in 2006 when Xi was still Party Secretary for Zhejiang Province. He remarked that the U.S. Government must have had very good intelligence, implying that Washington knew Xi was destined for high office, because the arrangements and treatment Xi

received were outstanding. Zheng said he looks forward to a productive exchange between Xi and Deputy Secretary Negroponte.

Olympics

13. (C) Zheng Zeguang praised President Bush for his statement that the Olympic Games should not be politicized and said that the Chinese public "got the message." His plans to come to China for the Olympics and attend the opening ceremony contrast with those of some European leaders. Zheng called CNN commentator Jack Cafferty "worse than an idiot" and wondered whether "some Chinese had killed his parents" to make him insult the Chinese people as he did. He noted that many heads of state and government (Note: by some accounts more than 150) will be coming, and, even though they were invited by their respective Olympic committees, it will be a big task for the MFA. DAS Christensen responded that the U.S. Government has the right approach on the Olympic Games. President Bush is determined not to politicize the Olympics. President Bush has said he is coming for the early part of the Olympics and Secretary Rice will come for the end. Our position has been that for the Olympics to be truly successful, China would need to put its best face forward. China should take seriously and make progress on some of the issues raised by groups calling on the United States and others to boycott the Olympics. In this light, he expressed hope for a productive bilateral human rights dialogue in late May.

14. (C) Zheng said China is prepared to strengthen Olympic

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security cooperation with the United States. The Ministry of Public Security is ready to sign an MOU on Olympic security cooperation with the United States, and is hopeful remaining details can be ironed out soon. Chinese officials are looking forward to discussing security cooperation with Assistant to the President Ken Wainstein when he visits Beijing May 12-15, Zheng said.

Dealing with the Dalai Lama

15. (C) DAS Christensen assessed that the dialogue with the Dalai Lama's personal representatives was constructive and yielded good discussion. The U.S. approach on the Tibet issue is consistent with the President's wish for China to have a successful Olympics. He urged China to take U.S. advice on Tibet in that spirit. He asked if China had set a date for the next round of dialogue. Zeng responded that China had agreed to further dialogue but he did not know when it would take place.

16. (C) On the Dalai Lama, the U.S. position is clear as is the Chinese position, Zheng explained. He wanted to make sure, however, that the United States has the "correct understanding" of what China has done, is doing, and will do. The Chinese government has taken steps to quell the unrest so that prosperity can continue. The Dalai Lama, however, has still not condemned the violent rioters of March 14. While acknowledging that the Dalai Lama is viewed as a religious figure, Zheng averred that he is "not so simple and has two faces." On the one hand he is a religious figure preaching peace and non-violence, but on the other hand he is the leader of the exile government in Dharamsala. That organization has a constitution calling for the establishment of an independent Tibetan Federal Republic. The Tibetan Youth Congress is also part of the exile movement and has a tendency toward terrorism and violence. It must be accepted that the Dalai Lama is an active political figure, Zheng remarked.

17. (C) Zheng asserted that China favors peaceful settlement of any disputes. Since 2002, China has conducted six rounds

of dialogue with the Dalai Lama's personal representatives. Hu Jintao told President Bush that China would take a serious, sober, and sincere approach to the issue. The Dalai Lama should stop activities aimed at splitting China, stop instigating and organizing violent activities, and stop sabotaging the Beijing Olympics. On this issue the entire Chinese nation, including overseas Chinese, is united.

18. (C) DAS Christensen responded that the United States does not see the exile Tibetan community as monolithic the way China does. The situation is much more complicated. DAS Christensen contended that the Dalai Lama has met all three Chinese preconditions for dialogue. The Dalai Lama has made clear that he does not support Tibetan independence, but rather true autonomy within the bounds of the PRC constitution. He has specifically condemned the violence that erupted in mid-March and threatened to step down if the violence did not end. In addition, he has spoken out in support of the Beijing Olympics. There are indeed elements in the Tibetan exile community that support violence, which is why China should engage with the Dalai Lama. As Secretary Rice told special envoy Li Zhaoxing, having dialogue with the Dalai Lama is a sign of strength befitting a great power. Isolating and vilifying him is a sign of weakness. For example, China should avoid the term "clique," which sounds like a vestige of Cold War propaganda.

19. (C) Zheng countered that the Dalai Lama has not specifically condemned those who instigated the violence on March 14 nor the protester who attacked the wheelchair athlete in Paris. His condemnation of violence is just empty rhetoric. Zheng said that this is a "real" issue not only for the Chinese Government but also for the Chinese people and said that anyone who thinks the Chinese Government does not have to deal with popular opinion is wrong. He urged Washington to be sophisticated in dealing with the Dalai Lama.

110. (C) Despite Chinese criticism of distorted reporting, DAS Christensen said that some of the most accurate and balanced reporting on the rioting came from an Economist correspondent and a Washington Post reporter who just happened to be in Lhasa when the violence erupted. He noted that these reports have not received coverage in Chinese media. Since then, much reporting has been based on hearsay or unreliable accounts from uninformed bystanders. The United States has pushed hard for reporters and diplomats to have access into

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Tibetan areas so that we would have a more complete picture of what is happening there. Zheng expressed interest in receiving copies of the press articles mentioned, but said Tibet is closed out of concern for the safety of foreigners. Domestic tourism restarted on May 1 and the region should reopen to foreigners soon.

Taiwan

111. (C) Zheng said the Mainland is eager to engage Taiwan and Hu Jintao has already held two meetings with Vice President-elect Vincent Siew and KMT Honorary Chairman Lien Chan. He recited Hu Jintao's "16 character phrase" that will serve as a guide for cross-Straits relations: "build mutual trust, set aside disputes, seek common ground while reserving differences, and together create win-win solutions." This approach supports the general goal of peaceful development. There are still forces in Taiwan who resist this trend, so he urged the United States to maintain its one China policy based on the three joint communiqués. Washington should continue to oppose Taiwan independence and not support Taiwan's participation in international organizations that require statehood as a prerequisite. He asserted that the Taiwan issue is still the most sensitive issue in U.S.-China relations.

112. (C) Zheng said that there is good momentum in

cross-Strait relations. He said he hopes that the United States will act constructively to provide a framework and a positive environment for that momentum to continue. China highly appreciates the U.S. stand against the UN referendum, which substantially increased trust between the two countries. He said China appreciates President Bush's policy and specifically acknowledged DAS Christensen's role in this process.

¶13. (C) DAS Christensen replied that the United States is encouraged by the developments in cross-Strait relations and that the Bo'ao meeting was a terrific idea and showed China at its confident best. The United States indeed supports efforts to improve cross-Strait relations. Support for independence on the island has not gone away, so during Ma's first term in office it will be very important to show that a moderate position produces practical, positive results. If that fails, the mood could swing back the other way. Taiwan needs to deal with the Mainland from a position of strength and confidence. Whatever the two sides agree to that is acceptable to both sides, the United States will support.

¶14. (C) DAS Christensen noted that international space is important to Taiwan and the United States supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations even when membership is impossible. The timing of the WHA meeting this year makes progress on that issue unlikely this time around, but the United States would like to see progress on Taiwan's participation in the WHO at the next opportunity. The Mainland should be open to allowing increased international space for Taiwan because Ma will propose acceptable nomenclature and will not use participation to push for independence. If he fails to gain more international space for Taiwan, after four years it may be hard to convince the Taiwan people that taking a moderate position improved Taiwan's standing in the world.

¶15. (C) Zheng chided DAS Christensen for being "so pessimistic," noting that formal negotiations will start soon on the basis of the 1992 consensus and will include discussion on international space for Taiwan. He said that the United States should trust the intelligence, creativity and wisdom of the Chinese. If the two sides are allowed to discuss issues free from external intervention, it will be easier to work things out. He requested that the United States give the two sides time to work out their problems. He said that Chen Shui-bian may take "mischievous actions" in the still-sensitive period before May 20. He urged the United States to not send any officials to Ma Ying-jeou's inauguration and not to announce any arms sales to Taiwan, which could be read as support for Taiwan independence. If the United States announces new arms sales, it will immediately impact the cross-Strait situation and "cause a setback to the current period of relaxation."

¶16. (C) DAS Christensen responded that our policy will not change and reminded Zheng that the Taiwan Relations Act is part of our one China policy. No one in Taiwan interprets U.S. arms sales as supporting Taiwan independence. Taiwan will best be able to deal with the Mainland from a position

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of strength and the United States has a legal obligation to assess Taiwan's defensive needs and provide defense articles where appropriate.

Six-Party Talks/NEAPSM

¶17. (C) DAS Christensen urged China to press North Korea to fulfill its commitment to prepare a complete and correct declaration. This is not a purely U.S.-DPRK bilateral issue, he stressed to Zheng, but a matter of importance to Beijing as well. Once the DPRK satisfies its commitment, the Six Parties can begin discussion of Phase III and a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism (NEAPSM), which will

further peace and stability in the region.

¶18. (C) DG Zheng said China wants to be helpful in this regard and shares a long-term strategic vision of the Korean Peninsula with the United States. China will work closely with all of the parties to ensure denuclearization takes place. Beijing is ready to engage in dialogue with the United States on an architectural framework for the region, he said, noting his agreement that the Six-Party Talks process has been good for regional peace and U.S.-China bilateral relations in general.

Iran

¶19. (C) DAS Christensen expressed to DG Zheng continued U.S. concern over energy deals and conventional arms sales with Iran. The United States hopes China is ending arms sales to Iran as it suggested it would. Pointing to the present crisis in Lebanon, he told Zheng that Iran exports instability to the region, and its promises to Beijing not to re-export Chinese weapons cannot be trusted. Chinese weapons threatening American forces and allies in the region will affect U.S.-China bilateral relations, he stated.

¶20. (C) Zheng assured DAS Christensen that China's intent is not to have conventional weapons sales become an "irritant" in bilateral relations. China wants peace and stability in the Middle East and has stopped its arms trade with "unstable countries." Beijing believes that Washington's closing the door to negotiations with Iran is not sustainable. Beijing instead favors a "carrots and sticks" approach, which is why Beijing supports a new incentive package for Iran. If the United States has evidence of Chinese weapons finding their way into the hands of Iranian-supported militant groups, Washington should share this information with China. DAS Christensen assured Zheng that evidence has been provided to senior PRC officials both in Beijing and Washington.

Visa Issue

¶21. (C) DAS Christensen raised the visa case of U.S. academic Justin Ruddelson, who is apparently being denied a visa because he contributed a chapter to a book on Xinjiang. DAS Christensen stressed that Ruddelson is not hostile to China, his contribution to the book was not offensive, and that he plans to lead a group of U.S. students for language study that is sponsored by the National Committee on U.S.-China relations, an organization that has long played a positive role in U.S.-China relations. The blocking of U.S. academics, many of whom have devoted their lives to studying China, is a poor policy and will only end up hurting China's image in the United States and reducing American understanding of China. Without hesitation, Zheng said he would look into the matter.

¶22. (U) DAS Christensen has cleared this cable.
RANDT